

PREPARING FOR THE INTERVIEW

1. The full name of the child and what the child prefers to be called.
2. Age and developmental assessment.
3. Address or current location of the child, and best way to contact child (In cases which the offender is a member of the family, determine whether the child or the offender will remain in the home).
4. Custodian of the child, and best way to contact custodian.
5. Identification of the suspected offender.
6. Offender's relationship and duration of relationship to child.
7. Offender's access to child.
8. Name, address, and method of contacting potential witnesses.
9. Present condition of the child.
10. Identification of any other victims or potential victims.

"CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE"

"INTERVIEWING THE CHILD"

Presented By:
TERRY HALL

Prepared By:



1-800-365-0119

INTERVIEWING THE CHILD

I. Interagency Coordination

There are times when the child must be interviewed in order to learn what has happened. However, every attempt should be made to minimize the need for interviews of child victims. Too often a victimized child is interviewed three or more times to satisfy various requirements of different agencies. Every effort should be made to have just one interview so that the information gathered will be sufficient for all agencies concerned with the child.

II. Procedural Issues and Environment

If an interview of a child is necessary, persons **trained specifically for such interviewing** should be available. Usually, **parents should not be present** while the child is being interviewed. Many children are afraid to speak in front of those who have hurt them; abused and neglected children are no exception. The parents should be informed of the need for the interview. If they object strongly, the law enforcement officer may obtain an order of the court to interview the child. In some crucial situations, it may be necessary to place the child in protective custody before proceeding. However, if the child specifically request the parents or another person present, it should be allowed. A frightened or insecure child will not give a complete statement.

III. Interview Strategies and Techniques

At times it is very difficult to obtain information from a child. The following are suggestions to help interviewers obtain complete and valid statements from a child.

1. **Do not** try to hug a child or sit them on your lap unless they initiate the response. However, it is ok to offer a hand shake when greeting the victim.
2. **Interview** in plain comfortable clothes. **Avoid** doing this in uniform if possible.
3. **Have parent prepare the child for the interview.** They are going to talk to a person who's job it is working with kids.
4. **Talk to the child in private and in a place free of interruptions.** Interruptions distract an already short attention span, divert focus of interview, and make self-conscious or apprehensive child withdraw. If feasible, only one adult should be present.
5. **With smaller children, avoid taking notes.** Younger children are easily distracted and you will loss contact. It may be useful to record the interview via audio or videotape recordings. Because recording equipment could be frightening to a younger child, it should be hidden whenever possible. Another approach is to make the recording a game, showing the child how they are being recorded. Teenagers will probably react very negatively toward an attempt to hide a recorder.

6. **Try to set the child at ease and establish a good rapport** before asking specific questions about abuse or neglect. The interviewer must keep in mind that the child may be hurt, in pain, fearful, confused, or apprehensive. The child must be made as comfortable as possible under the circumstances. The interview should be conducted on a friend-to-friend basis.
7. **At first, exchange information by making routine information** such as name, age, grade, school, teacher's name, siblings, family composition, pets, friends, activities, favorite game/TV shows, etc. It often helps to share your personal information when appropriate, (e.g., pictures of your children, pets, will help humanize the interviewer).
8. **Assess child's level of sophistication and ability to understand concepts.** Before interviewing the child about the incident, the interviewer should know how well the child can read, write, count, tell time, know colors or shapes, know the day or date; know birth date; remember past events (breakfast, yesterday, last year); understand before and after, know the differences between the truth and lies, know about money; assume responsibilities (e.g., goes around neighborhood alone, stays at home alone, makes dinner, etc.). If the child has problems with certain concepts, do not use those concepts during further questioning.
9. **Position yourself at the child's level.** Do not interview a child across a desk or table. Sit next to the child at a comfortable distance (not too close, not too far). Sitting on the floor face to face is a good technique. Remember children need body space too.
10. **Approach the interview** as the child being your partner, and you need them to assist you in getting the suspect help.
11. **Avoid leading the child** during the interview. Be careful to monitor your facial expressions and noddings of the head especially when using a video tape. The video tape will pick up on body cues from the interviewer which tend to lead the witness and will result in less convincing evidence when used in court.
12. **Let the child tell the story of the event in their own words** without interrupting and then go back and clarify by asking questions, **using their vocabulary.** Repeat the child's own words to get clarification. Be sure to obtain the who, when, where, and how.
 - A. Documenting the exact words or phrases the child used to describe the event (could show association with the suspect).
 - B. Giving the child words for body parts ect. indicates the child has been coached.
13. **Do not ask WHY questions** (e.g., "Why did you go to the house?". "Why didn't you tell?"). They tend to sound accusatory.
14. **Word the questions in such a way that they do not put "WORDS" in the child's mouth.** (e.g. Can you tell me what happened?)
 - A. I need to know what he (she) did?

B. Where were you touched?

C. Can you tell me what you were touched with?

15. **Phrasing of questions.** Questions should not be phrased to imply blame, example: Did you put his penis in your mouth?
16. **Allowing children to point to body parts or dolls in order to convey information** that they may feel inhibited to say vocally. (eg., "Point to where your daddy hit you.") For victims of sexual abuse, anatomically correct dolls can assist the child in providing necessary information.
17. It is important to **obtain specific information** concerning penetration, exact location of fondling on top of or underneath clothing. What did the penis look like? However, to avoid leading the child, word questions in a reverse way to let the child use his/her own words to clarify the situation. For example, if a girl indicated that the person touched her vagina; to obtain clarification, the interviewer might state "Oh, he touched the clothing covering your vagina." This will allow the child to use her own words to explain that no, in fact, he touched her skin.
18. With younger children, the interview will have to move quickly without appearing to do so. **Keep questions as short as possible and no double questions.**
19. **Do not** make any judgemental comments about the offender.
20. If there is a lot of anxiety during the conversation, **do not expect to get all the information you think necessary at one time.** Talk to the child later in the day or possibly another day.
21. **Interview Times.** Try to keep the age of the child in mind when scheduling the interview. Avoid scheduling young children during their nap time or after 5:00 p.m.
22. **Do not** correct a child if they start to masturbate or start a humping motion, observe and document.
23. The interview should **include a discussion of what will happen next and how the officer will use the information the child has given.** However, the interviewer does not need to go into much detail. Most children cannot project themselves into an unknown situation and predict how they will behave. Undue emphasis on trial will have little meaning and often frightens the child (causing nightmares and apprehension).
24. **After the interview, make sure the child is at ease and that he/she is not afraid of what might happen.** Praise the child for the information and cooperation. Reassure that he/she is not going to get into trouble. Let the child know they have helped the suspect to receive help for their thinking problem.
25. Take the child to an **empty court room** to make them familiar with it prior to the case.

Interrogation Tips:

1. Find out everything possible about the suspect.
2. Bring the suspect to your turf
3. You want to be intimidatating without appearing to be.
4. Get the perp thinking about the case.
5. Don't be in a hurry
6. Look through your folder glancing over at the suspect.
7. Make sure your folder is thick and has the suspects name on the outside in bold letters. Solid evidence on the other side with a case number.
8. Sit close violate body space talk to them for awhile about anything but the case. Give them time to sweat and wonder when you are going to get to it. They have an answer ready for you but you are not going to ask them the question.
9. Tell them how important their answers will be. A lot of eye contact.
10. In a case like this I need 2 anchors and I have 3, pointing to the file.
11. I know you know why you here. It's about Cindy.
12. As I look at some of the problems your have had (looking at the file) I can see where you have been stressed , and made to do something you wouldn't normally do.
13. I know you touched her , I just need to know why. Never say " did you".
14. Is this something that just happened or is it something you planned to do?
15. Did you planned to hurt Cindy,or did you just want to touch her?
16. Those detectives out there probably think you have expose yourself and touched several kids, but I know Cindy is the only one you have ever touched, now isn't that true?
17. I know you have worked at Ford for several years. I know you are good at your job. Please understand I have been in this job for ---- years and I know my job very well. It would be a big mistake for you to think you can lie to me.
18. You are no different than me, I have nieces too. You think I have not thought about doing some of the same things you did?
19. Sometime we have so much stress it makes us do things we regret later. You do regret the mistake don't you?
20. Was this a one time thing or are you doing this to other children?
21. You know I didn't come out to your house with my police car and embarrass you in front of your neighbors did I? No I ask you to come down and talk this out so when you leave I will know this was just a one-time deal. Do you want me to question your boss; fellow workers and neighbors or you want to just keep it in this room?
22. The first thing an alcoholic has to do before he can receive help, is what? What about a drug user.
23. Do you want me to handle this as a criminal matter or a person that needs some help?
24. You tell me the truth and I will recommend some help with what ever else the judge decides.
25. Look at this videotape and tell me whom you would believe if you were a Judge. We have enough to convict you but why don't you promise me it won't happen again and spare you and your family the embarrassment of a trial.
26. I can't help you if you continue to lie. Criminals lie, people who need help admit they have a problem.
27. What did she do to make you think it ways ok to touch her?
28. If you don't have the courage to ask for help, won't you at least write her a letter of apology?

29. I'll tell you what; you need more help than I thought. Before you leave would you promise me to get an appointment today to see a counselor? Call me and let me verify you did and let the counselor verify you showed up for the appointment?
But promise me you will not touch her anymore while you are getting help.
30. Have the child to call the suspect on the phone and ask the location of the evidence (pictures, videos, etc.)
31. Have the victim call and say she disclosed through a program and the police want to talk to her. What should she tell them?
32. Have a large bible and a picture of the Lord behind you so the suspect can see it.
33. Did you follow the O.J. trial ? Do you know about D.N.A. and dead skin cells. It's like fingerprints on the body. If we get a sample of yours would they match the ones recovered from Cindy?
34. Leave file on desk with prosecutors card and not attached. " You have enough for your warrant. If he refuses to cooperate and get help call me and I will file it.
35. Polygraph.

CHARACTERISTICS OF CHILD SEX OFFENDERS

THE FIXATED OFFENDER - Generally poor prognosis for treatment

1. Prefers sexual contact with children rather than adults.
2. Is under little or no precipitating stress when contact is desired.
3. Behaves **COMPULSIVELY**, following through on the imagined activity without self-criticism or restraint. Feels no guilt.
4. Typically has not developed mature peer relationships, and finds satisfaction in contacts with youngsters.
5. Can be described as being immature, showing tendencies, behaviors and attitudes thought appropriate for those much younger in age. Goes down to the level of the child.
6. Premeditates about the intended actions, adopting behaviors of children when seeking out children for sexual contact
7. Begins being attracted sexually toward children during puberty.
8. Overidentifies with the desired children and does not think the behaviors being used or the behaviors desired from the child are victimizing.
9. May choose male as well as female children.
10. Is seldom female.
Usually not married but will marry for convenience.

THE REGRESSED OFFENDER - Generally fair prognosis for treatment

1. Prefers sexual contact with age-similar mates/adults usually.
2. Experiences some stress factor or factors such as a sudden, unanticipated accumulation of adult responsibility which seems insurmountable.
3. Substitutes sexual advances and contact with a child for appropriate adult connections. Brings child up to their level.
4. Experiences peer relations as conflictual and wishes to avoid these and/or reward self for putting up with the stresses and problems of living.
5. Finds interpersonal relationships difficult or demanding or both
6. Acts impulsively, reaching toward the innocence, acceptance, attraction of the female child in the way that seems most effective between adults.
7. Begins to choose the child contact in addition to or in place of the adult sexual relationship sometime in late adolescence or adulthood.
8. Seeks out females rather than boys in most instances although male children being victimized by the regressed offender is not unknown.
Usually married.

FOR BOTH FIXATED AND REGRESSED OFFENDERS

1. The child is symbol of the areas which contain conflicts in the offender's life.
2. Adult sexual relationship pose problems and threats which inhibit the offender's involvement in them.
3. During the time the child requires a certain amount of skill and application of attention and serves as a substitute for the harsh reality of the adult world requiring adult skills.
4. Handicapped or special children are likely targets of **MISPLACED AFFECTION** and pressured attention.
5. The action toward this child is viewed as unacceptable to other adults and the child is sometimes warned, threatened, or bribed into not reporting or disclosing to any other person what has taken place.

CASE PLANNING

1. Has the child reported the situation to family, friends, teachers, or anyone else?
2. What triggered the report: a TV program, behavior problem, family conflict, direct questioning?
3. What were the **EXACT WORDS** the child used to disclose the abuse?
4. How was the report received (shock, indignation, blame, shame, threats of retribution, and toward whom)?
5. How does the child feel about the abuse, about the offender, about the reaction of the family, and about his or her personal safety?
6. What does the child want to see happen — i.e., his or her personal concerns?
7. Is the child displaying any behavior that may be associated with trauma (frustration, acting out, depression, sleep disturbance, withdrawal, aggression, self-destructive acts, sexualized approaches to others)?
8. How many people have talked with the child about the abuse?

Private ordeal becomes victim's public nightmare

DEAR ABBY — Recently my husband and I heard Norman Early, the district attorney from Denver, speak on the criminal justice system — from the victim's point of view.

He read the enclosed account of a victim of incest. Her name is "Cindy" and she is 12. I thought it worthy of inclusion in your column. I hope you agree.

MARY DEAN ARMSTRONG

DEAR MARY — I do. And here it is:

Promises, Promises — A Child's View of Incest

I asked you for help and you told me you would if I told you the things my dad did to me. It was really hard for me to say all those things, but you told me to trust you — then you made me repeat them to 14 different strangers.

I asked you for privacy and you sent two policemen to my school in front of everyone, to "go downtown" for a talk in their black and white car — like I was the one being busted.

I asked you to believe me, and you said that you did, then you connected me to a lie detector and took me to court where lawyers put me on trial like I was a liar. I can't help it if I can't remember times or dates or explain why I couldn't tell my mom. Your questions got me confused — my confusion got you suspicious.

I asked you for help and you

Dear
Abby



Abigail Van Buren

gave me a doctor with cold metal gadgets and cold hands ... just like my father, who said it wouldn't hurt, just like my father, who said not to cry. He said I look fine — good news for you. You said, bad news for my "case."

I asked you for confidentiality and you let the newspaper get my story. What does it matter that they left out my name when they put in my father's and our home address? Even my best friend's mother won't let her talk to me anymore.

I asked for protection and you gave me a social worker who patted my head and called me "Honey" (mostly because she could never remember my name). She sent me to live with strangers in another place, with a different school.

Do you know what it's like to live where there's a lock on the refrigerator, where you have to ask permission to use the shampoo, and where you can't use the phone to call your friends? You get

used to hearing, "Hi, I'm your new social worker, this is your new foster sister, dorm mother, group home." You tiptoe around like a perpetual guest and don't even get to see your own puppy grow up.

Do you know what it's like to have more social workers than friends?

Do you know what it feels like to be the one that everyone blames for all the trouble? Even when they were speaking to me, all they talked about was lawyers, shrinks, fees and whether or not they'll loose the mortgage. Do you know what it's like when your sisters hate you, and your brother calls you a liar? It's my word against my own father's. I'm 12 years old and he's the manager of a bank. You say you believe me — who cares, if nobody else does?

I asked you for help and you forced my mom to choose between us — she chose him, of course. She was scared and had a lot to lose. I had a lot to lose too — the difference was you never told me how much.

I asked you to put an end to the abuse — you put an end to my whole family. You took away my nights of hell and gave me days of hell instead. You've exchanged my private nightmare for a very public one.

FEELINGS BY CINDY,
AGE 12; PUT INTO WORDS
BY KEE MacFARLANE

DON'T BE A PART OF THE PROBLEM BE A PART OF THE SOLUTION.

Young killer's pleas went unanswered

■ Boy who got little help before killing his abusive father will get counseling in family-style setting.

By Rob Schneider
STAFF WRITER

MARION, Ind. — Wayne Salyers Jr. doesn't have much reason to trust adults.

His father regularly beat him. His family failed to protect him.

School officials did little. Not when he wrote a counselor, describing how his father beat him with belts and boards. Not when he threw himself around his principal's ankles, begging her not to call his father to report a behavior problem.

No one, it seemed, would help him. So on a night last August, he abandoned his Hot Wheels, grabbed a .44-caliber Magnum from his parents' bedroom and killed his father.

On Tuesday, Wayne turned 11. On Wednesday, the Fairmount boy walked into the Grant County Courthouse in handcuffs and leg shackles to see what adults had decided his future should be — a stay of undetermined length at a facility where he can receive counseling and live in a family-style environment.

But those close to the case said it never should have gotten to this point.

"What we have here was a boy that was crying out for help and didn't get that help," said Paul Mones, a Portland, Ore., attorney who helped represent Wayne.

As early as second grade, teachers at Park Elementary School became concerned about Wayne's behavior. He was acting out, calling other children names and getting into fights.

School counselor Donna Hull told investigators she tried to determine whether anything at home was contributing to Wayne's problems. She questioned the boy but had no success. Whenever the subject of his home life came up, she said, he became fearful.

Any chance to follow up ended in March 1999, when the school received a letter from Wayne Salyers Sr. stating that he didn't want his son, then a third-grader, talking to the counselor without his or his wife's consent.

But last year, Wayne Jr. con-

Dear Mrs. Hull

I am writing this note because I need to tell you something very important and it is about my dad. my dad abuses me and my mom and my sister. He abuses me with; LEATHER BELTS, BOARDS and two by fours.

phone number

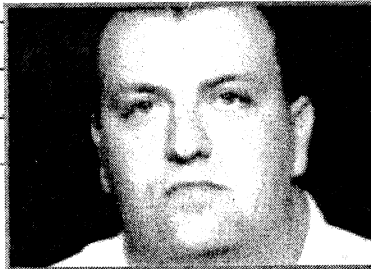
address;

Indiana

Fairmount

please contact me as soon as you can

Sincerely
Wayne Salyers

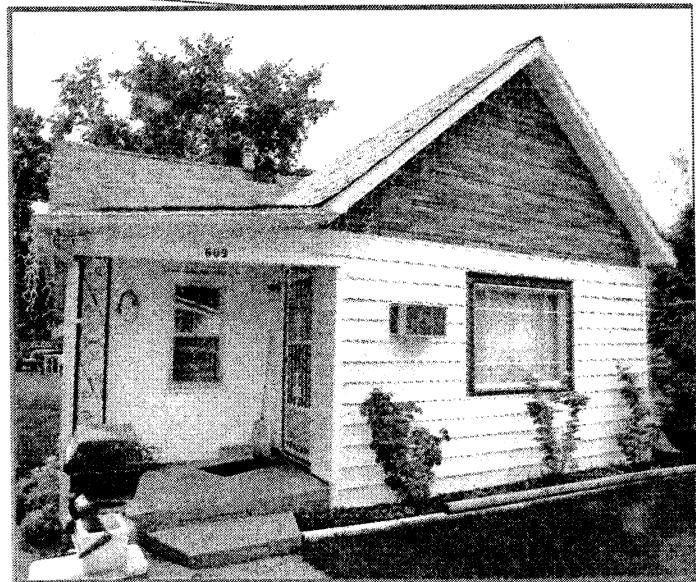


Wayne Salyers' note to a school counselor said that his father, Wayne Salyers Sr. (above), was abusing his family. By the time the counselor contacted Wayne Jr., the boy had changed his mind and wanted the note back.

Slaying scene: The Salyers family lived in this Fairmount home, where Wayne Salyers Jr., then 10, gunned down his father with a .44-caliber weapon he had taken from his parents' bedroom.



2000 school photo



File Photo / Frank Espicr

Facing uncertain future:

Wayne Salyers Jr. walks out of the Grant County Courthouse in Marion. He will be sent to a facility where, officials say, he will receive counseling and live in a family-style environment. At one time, he faced a murder charge, but prosecutors allowed him to plead guilty to voluntary manslaughter. He was sentenced Wednesday.



Associated Press / Denise L. Oles

KILLER

Continued from Page 1

tacted the counselor on his own. On wide-ruled notebook paper, the fourth-grader wrote:

"I need to tell you something very important and it is about my dad. My dad abuses me and my mom and my sister. He abuses me with leather belts, boards and two by fours. Please contact me as soon as you can. Sincerely Wayne Salyers."

But by the time Hull contacted Wayne, the boy had changed his mind about the note and wanted it back.

"I didn't push the issue when he said he changed his mind and he didn't want to come in," Hull told investigators. She said she had been told by the school principal not to see Wayne anymore.

There were other troubling signs.

Wayne's third- and fourth-grade teachers told investigators the boy would become frightened if he learned school officials were going to call his father to report poor behavior.

Principal Lynn Wilson recalled one instance in which Wayne began sobbing hysterically at word that a call home was imminent. "He ended up on the floor, holding onto my ankle, begging me not to call his father," she said.

Yet when Wayne's attorneys checked with the county's Child

Protective Service, they found no record of the incident.

The agency was contacted in April 2000 when Wayne showed up at school limping. His father, he told Wilson, had thrown a fork at him, stabbing him in the foot.

But even that report yielded no results. Wilson said she was notified by Child Protective Service officials that the case had been investigated, and the incident was "unsubstantiated."

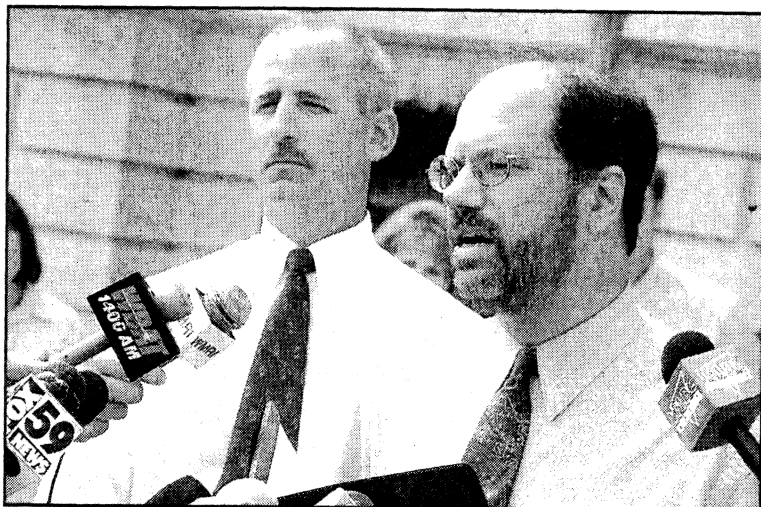
Wayne's sister later told investigators that Salyers had told his son to say he had stepped on nails while playing at a friend's house.

Charles Osterholt, director of the Grant County Division of Family and Children, declined to comment on the investigation of the fork incident. But he said that during an internal review after the shooting, the agency "took a hard look at what we did" and determined that it had "stayed within the guidelines."

"This is just a very difficult circumstance," Osterholt said.

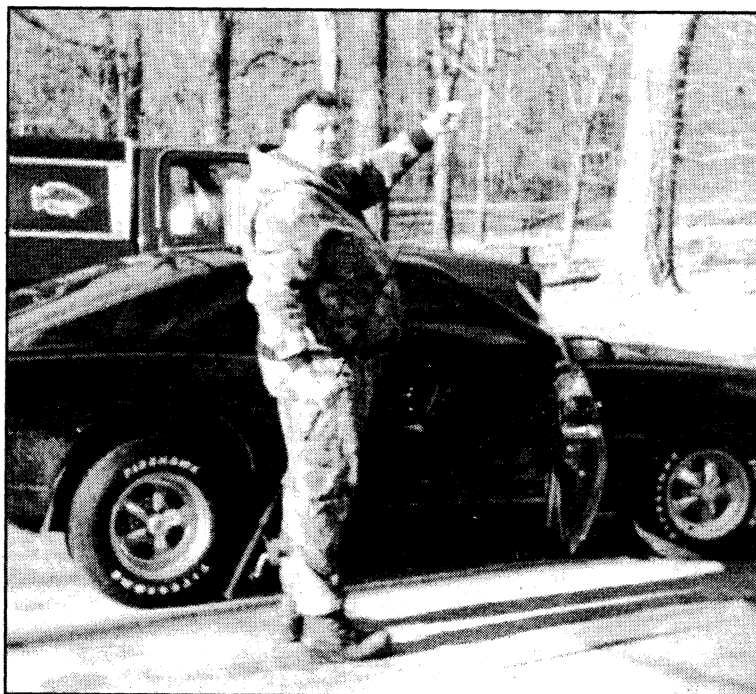
Martin Lake, Wayne's primary attorney, believes that if the school had mentioned the boy's prior emotional outburst or his note to Hull, the agency's findings might have been different. "I think had they done that, the Child Protective Service might have taken some action," he said.

But Fred Herron, an assistant superintendent of the Madison-Grant School Corp., said the



Associated Press / Jeff Morehead

Questions: State Police Detective Brian Buroker (left) and Chief Deputy Prosecutor James Luttrull agonized over the evidence.



Submitted Photo

Going fishing: Family members say Wayne Salyers Sr. was a stay-at-home father who attended his son's baseball games. He and his son, Wayne Jr., went on camping trips together.